

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1. THE NAME:

The First Baptist Church of Marshall, Minnesota

ARTICLE 2 THE PURPOSE:

The purpose of this church shall be the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; seeking (1) the salvation of the lost at home and abroad, (2) to nourish and build up its members in the faith, thus encouraging growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, (3) to encourage and advance Christian fellowship among the members and believers of like faith and practice, in conformity with the New Testament Standards.

ARTICLE 3 DOCTRINAL STATEMENT*:

I. Of the Scriptures

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried. *2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19–21.*

II. The True God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. *Exodus 20:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11.*

III. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He

* Adopted from the statement of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We believe that the sign/revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit have fulfilled their purpose and are not applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit today. *John 14:16, 17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1–3; John 16:8–11; Acts 5:30–32; John 3:5, 6; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28–30; 13:8–10; 14:1–40; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:2–4.*

IV. The Devil, or Satan

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. *Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.*

V. Creation

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and humanity; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that Adam and Eve were created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. *Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3.*

In light of God's creative design, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bonds of a Biblically defined marriage. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God's gracious will. *Genesis 2:18, 24, 25; Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 1:24–29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 7:1–5; Ephesians 5:22–33; Hebrews 13:4.*

VI. The Fall of Mankind

We believe that mankind was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state, and all human beings sinned in him, in consequence of which all human beings are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. *Genesis 3:1–6; Romans 3:10–19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32.*

VII. The Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other person was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son. *Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14.*

VIII. Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith. *Jonah 2:9; Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 2:14–17; Isaiah 53:4–7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.*

IX. Resurrection and Priesthood of Christ

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us. *Matthew 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2–6, 51; Acts 1:9–11; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 2:17; 5:9, 10.*

X. Grace and the New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and

newness of life. *John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20–33; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8.*

XI. Justification

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood. *Romans 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9.*

XII. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return. *Hebrews 10:10-14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:25–27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Revelation 22:11.*

XIII. The Security of the Saints

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Romans 8:35–39; Jude 1.*

XIV. The Church

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, godly men whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all people as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. *1 Corinthians 11:2; Acts 20:17–28; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Acts 2:41, 42.*

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ. *1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13-18.*

XV. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper, and that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers. *Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 42.*

XVI. Separation

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy. *2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11.*

XVII. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of kings. *Romans 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Exodus 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19, 20; Daniel 3:17, 18.*

XVIII. Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. *Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 11:1-32; Ezekiel 37.*

XIX. Rapture and Subsequent Events

We believe in the pretribulational rapture of the church, an event that can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. *1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 51–54; Philippians 3:20, 21; Revelation 3:10.*

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the premillennial return of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish His kingdom upon this earth. *Daniel 9:25–27; Matthew 24:29–31; Luke 1:30–33; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1–9; Acts 2:29, 30; Revelation 20:1–4, 6.*

XX. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among all people both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire. *Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Romans 7:6; 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34–41; John 8:21; Revelation 20:14, 15.*

ARTICLE 4 MEMBERSHIP:

The membership of this church shall consist of such believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as have been baptized in water, who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and who agree to be governed by this constitution.

I. QUALIFICATIONS:

Any person may become a member of this church upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, having been baptized by immersion and upon recommendation of the Pastor and Board of Deacons and by vote of the church. In each case the candidate must give evidence of a change of heart and the testimony of a Christian life. A vote of two-thirds of all members present and voting is necessary for the admittance of the new member.

The pastor of the church and the board of deacons of the church shall examine all applicants for membership on the following questions:

1. *Do you believe the Bible to be the very Word of God, and that herein only is contained a knowledge of the way of salvation?*
2. *Have you accepted Christ as your personal Savior, and have you now peace with God through Him?*
3. *As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, have you been baptized by immersion?*
4. *Will you study earnestly to know your duty as a Christian steward, and will you contribute to the support of the gospel as God prospers you?*
5. *Do you cheerfully accept the obligations imposed on all members by our constitution?*

II. DUTIES OF MEMBERS:

In order that persons applying for church membership may be informed as to the duties of members, they shall have the church constitution presented to them by the pastor or the board of deacons, and they shall subscribe to it, both in letter and in spirit. They will honor and esteem their pastor, pray for him daily and assist him in carrying out the program of the church. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church and, if at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental doctrines of this church or, if for any other reason are unable to harmonize with others, they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship but will quietly withdraw from its membership.

III. DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS:

(a) Voluntary – Members in good standing may, at their own request, have a church letter sent directly to the church with which they desire to unite. Letters are not to be granted to persons to carry or keep in their possession. Members leaving the city remain members of this church until they withdraw by letter or until their names are dropped from the roll.

(b) By exclusion – Any member who is guilty of serious misconduct and who persists in the same after due admonition of the pastor and board of deacons, (this to be done according to Matt. 18:15-17), may be excluded from membership of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, at any regular business meeting, provided notice of the contemplated action shall have been announced at the regular midweek meeting and to the offending member two weeks prior to action. Any member guilty of habitual, long-continued and unjustifiable absence from the services of the church and non-support of the church for one year automatically by such action dismisses himself.

ARTICLE 5 OFFICERS:**I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

All officers of all organizations of the church including the Sunday School teachers must (1) Be a member of the church in good and regular standing. (2) Be regular in attending the appointed services of the church.

II. THE PASTOR:

(a) General statement: It shall be required, perpetually, that no person shall hold office as pastor of this church who does not wholeheartedly subscribe to the doctrinal statement herein stated.

(b) Qualifications: The qualifications for men serving in this office shall be those set forth in I Tim. 3:1-7.

(c) Duties: (1) The pastor shall have the general oversight of the entire work of the church. (2) He shall preach the gospel of Christ and the whole council of God. (3) He shall administer the ordinances. (4) He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members. (5) He shall tenderly watch over the membership. (6) He shall promote the spiritual interests of the church. (7) He shall organize and develop its strength for the best possible services. (8) He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees. (9) The pastor shall be the moderator of all business meetings of the church. If the business concerns the pastor or if, in his discretion, he desires not to act as moderator, he shall entrust this duty to a member of the board of deacons.

(d) The Privileges: The pastor shall be privileged to hold one revival meeting away from home each year, providing the whole arrangement is authorized by church vote. The pastor's vacation shall consist of two Sundays including the surrounding week-days up to 20 days. Said time to be agreed upon by the church.

(e) Severance: The relation between the pastor and the church shall be permanent until dissolved at the option of either party by giving two months notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relation between pastor and church may be considered at any regular business meeting of the church, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to the said regular business meeting. A two-thirds majority of the members present and voting shall be sufficient to decide the matter.

III. ASSISTING PASTORS:

(a) Calling Assisting Pastors: When the need for assisting pastors occurs, the pastor and board of deacons shall examine the candidate and, upon approval, present him to the church. He shall be voted into office by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting at any church business meeting. His salary shall be agreed upon at the time of election of the assisting pastor and may be changed at any business meeting. The assisting pastors shall be entitled to an annual vacation with pay, not to exceed two weeks.

(b) Duties: The assisting pastors shall be responsible to the church through the pastor. They shall be directly under the supervision of the pastor for their duties.

(c) Severance: Assisting pastors shall be free to resign as they feel led, by giving two months notice, or less by mutual consent. An assisting pastor may be dismissed by two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any business meeting provided notice of the action be given two Sundays prior to the meeting.

IV. DEACONS:

(a) Qualifications: The qualifications for men serving in this office shall be those set forth in I Tim. 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3.

(b) Selection: A member to the board of deacons shall be elected for a term of three years, with at least two members being elected at every annual business meeting of the church. Total board is seven.

(c) Duties: They shall with the pastor share responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the flock, and with him consider all applications for church membership and all requests for letters or dismissal. They shall cooperate with him in providing the pulpit supplies and the leaders of the prayer meeting in the pastor's absence. No one shall fill the pulpit of this church whose beliefs conflict with the doctrinal statement contained in this constitution. No outside speaker shall be invited by any organization or person from within or outside the church unless respectfully submitted to the pastor and deacons for their approval. They shall cooperate with the pastor in visiting the members, in the care of the sick, needy, and distressed members of the church. They shall assist in the distribution of the elements in the communion service and assist in the baptismal services. They shall with the pastor assist in the promotion of the evangelistic, missionary, and church music programs. The deacons shall also constitute the Board of Trustees and shall, under the general direction of the church and in accordance with the laws of the state, hold in trust the property of the church, and shall supervise the use and care of church properties and equipment. They shall supervise the

preparation and raising of an adequate budget, and shall oversee the disbursement of all funds and shall conduct all such other business as the church may delegate to them. This board shall audit and may authorize all bills not included in the church budget and not exceeding \$1000.00 to be paid by the treasurer, who shall be subject to call for council by this board. They shall constitute the pulpit committee. They shall be called together by the pastor to organize immediately after the annual election. They shall elect their own chairman and secretary and designate committees.

V. DEACONESSES:

(a) Selection: There shall be four deaconesses. They shall be elected by ballot at the annual business meeting of the church to a term of two years, with at least two deaconesses being elected at every annual business meeting of the church.

(b) Duties: They shall assist the pastor and deacons in the visitation of the sick, the caring for the needy, the observance of the church ordinances. They shall arrange for activities of Christian fellowship in the church and shall make arrangements for entertaining visiting speakers.

VI. CLERK:

(a) Selection: The clerk and assistant shall be elected to office at the annual business meeting of the church for a period of one year.

(b) Duties: The clerk shall keep an accurate record of the business proceedings of the church, including the reception and dismissal of the members of the church and their addresses; issue the letter of dismissal as authorized by the church; conduct all official correspondence; preserve and file all letters, reports and other documents pertaining to this office. The clerk shall deliver immediately to his successor all books, files, and other documents in his possession.

VII. TREASURER:

(a) Selection: The treasurer and an assistant shall be elected for terms of one year at the annual business meeting of the church.

(b) Duties: The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements. He shall together with the assistant, count and record all contributions made to the church. In the absence of the assistant at the church service, one of the deacons present shall take his responsibility in counting and recording the offerings. The treasurer shall make a quarterly report to the church and whenever directed by the church.

VIII. USHERS:

Five ushers shall be elected annually. They shall elect a head usher. He shall appoint all needed help and he shall consult with the pastor as problems arise. Those serving as ushers are to assist attendants in the worship services to their seats, see to it that they have a hymn book and bulletin. They are to aid in the comfort of all who attend. They receive the offerings and keep attendance records at all public meetings.

IX. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT:

The Sunday School Superintendent and an assistant shall be elected for a term of one year at the annual meeting. The superintendent shall have charge of the organization and operation of the Sunday School. He shall with the teachers and other officers of the school select all new teachers and other officers. The selection of any study material, teachers, and other officers must be presented to the pastor and deacon-trustee board for their approval. The assistant superintendent shall act in the absence of the superintendent.

X. COMMITTEES:

(a) Nominating Committee: The nominating committee shall consist of five members elected by the church at the third quarterly business meeting. It shall be their duty to prepare a list of names from the membership of the church of those qualified to fill the various offices. It shall interview each nominee proposed and ascertain his or her willingness to serve in case of election. The committee shall endeavor to nominate two or more persons for each office to be filled, and report the names to the church at least one week before the election is to be held. The committee shall prepare ballots for use at the election. This does not exclude nominations from the floor.

(b) Pulpit Committee: In the event of a vacancy in the office of pastor, a successor shall be chosen at the earliest time possible. The committee shall contact suitable men and invite them to come and preach at one or more of the regular services. The committee shall recommend not more than one candidate at a time to the church for acceptance or rejection. The announcement of the meeting for the election shall be made as far in advance of the event as possible, but not less than the time elapsing from a Sunday evening service to the following Sunday morning service. The pulpit committee shall offer the name of the candidate to the congregation for balloting. Members shall mark their ballots "yes" for a favorable vote, or "no" for an unfavorable vote. Three-fourths of the voting members present shall be necessary for election.

ARTICLE 6 QUORUM:

In all business meetings of the church, twenty-five percent of the resident membership (those living within 25 miles) fifteen years of age or older shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 7 RULES OF ORDER:

Robert's Rules of Order with Christian consideration shall be the guide in all business meetings.

ARTICLE 8 VOTING REQUIREMENTS:

Any member in good standing who is fifteen years of age or older shall have the privilege of voting on church business, except in the election of deacons and in the conducting of the business of the incorporated society. In those two instances state law requires that no one under 21 years of age be allowed to vote.

ARTICLE 9 AMENDMENTS:

These articles may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any business meeting of the church, provided that a notice of the proposed amendment has been given at two regular services within four weeks preceding the meeting.

Updated July 2013